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Interventions and engagement in ENERGISE Living Labs : Policy brief and recommendations

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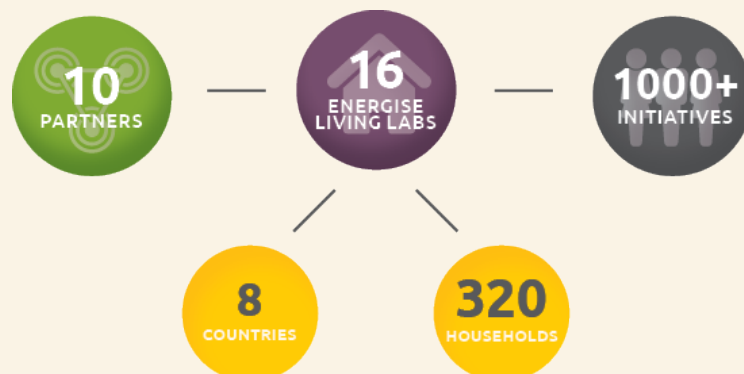
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INTERVENTIONS AND ENGAGEMENT IN ENERGISE LIVING LABS

POLICY BRIEF AND RECOMMENDATIONS



ENERGISE LIVING LABS

Fundamental changes in consumption are required to mitigate climate change on the scale and pace necessary. The everyday consumption practices and routines of households cause a large share of CO₂ emissions from energy use. In order to find solutions to these problems, the ENERGISE Living Labs (ELLs) focused on reducing energy use in households while co-creating knowledge on why energy-intensive practices are performed and how they depend on the context in which they are performed.

Building on the ENERGISE conceptual framework, the ELL design consists of six phases:

1. Defining the **contextual aspects** and social and material conditions underlying practices.

The ENERGISE project opted for interventions that focus on challenging the households to question their space heating and laundry practices, as these could be targeted in different contexts across European countries.

2. Identifying one or several **intervention and engagement methods**, based on findings from the database of sustainable energy consumption initiatives and previous research (Laakso & Heiskanen 2017).

A challenge was chosen as the intervention method due to its simplicity, comparability and potential for disrupting routines. However, there are different intervention and engagement methods in addition to challenges that might be appropriate in different contexts (Heiskanen et al. 2018a). In ELLs, the households were encouraged to challenge their assumptions on how to perform practices and to develop “innovations in practice”.

3. A **deliberation** phase, in which the baseline of energy use is monitored, and the practices related to energy use are discussed together with households.

The ELL interventions were launched by a deliberation meeting that intends to bring routines into active reflection and to co-create knowledge on *how* and *why* practices are performed as they are.

4. The intervention and engagement methods are utilised in real-life in the **testing** phase, which also includes monitoring households’ activities in order to observe the interconnections and potential rebound or other effects due to the changes in routines.

In the domain of laundry, the households were encouraged to consider when a piece of clean clothing becomes unclean and how to make clothes stay wearable for longer. In space heating, the households were encouraged to develop ways to achieve the preferred level of comfort at a reduced temperature (such as wearing more and warmer clothes, not heating unused rooms or using some of the rooms less). The households

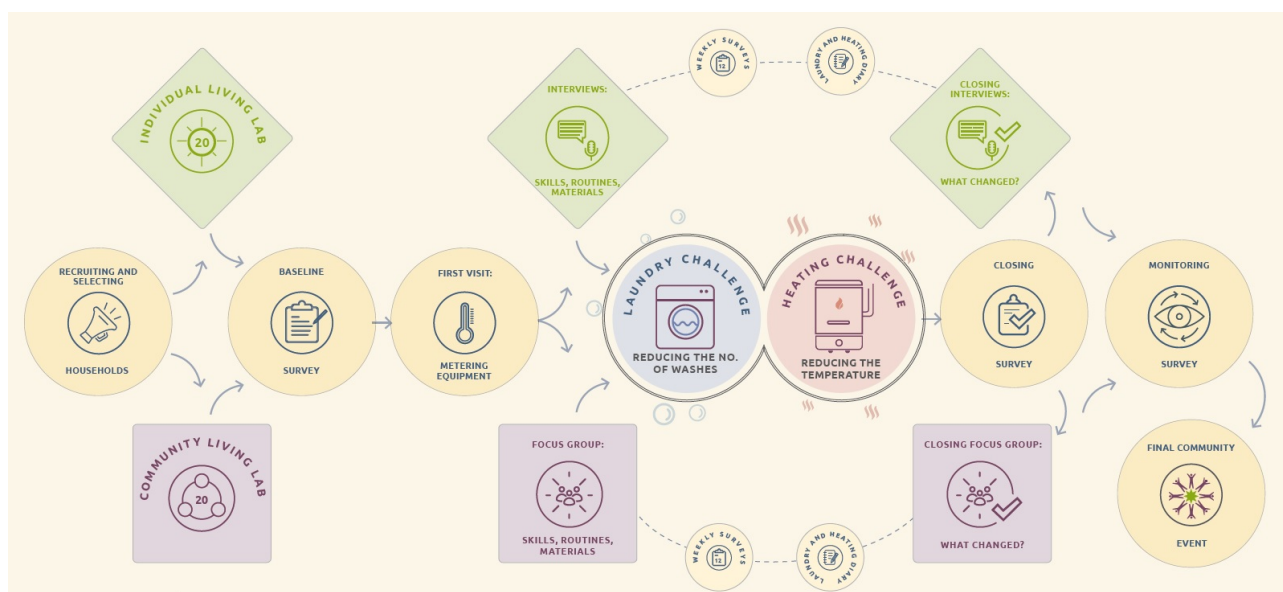
were provided with kits consisting of materials and tips to support the challenges (such as aprons, hangers, wool socks and warm drinks).

5. After the testing phase, households are met in a **reflection** meeting to discuss their experiences.

The participants had a chance for reflection and sharing their experiences on how they adapted to the challenge and what new routines they created, but also on what was difficult or for some reason deemed impossible, and why this was so, as well as how they could (and why they should) continue with the new or changed practices in the long term.

6. **Evaluating** the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the ELL (Heiskanen et al. 2018b).

When evaluating the outcomes, an effort was made to study how the ELLs had influenced on the overall change in practices and on energy consumption. The evaluation shows that being a part a community can have a positive impact on the ambition level of the intervention (Matschoss et al., forthcoming). In addition to deliberation and monitoring, material support can also provide a rupture in routines as households start to reflect on their actions based on new material items in the home that help to make energy use tangible.



Step-by-step guidelines and online tools for planning, implementing and evaluating ELLs are available at <http://www.energise-project.eu/livinglabs>. The aim of the online tools is to serve everyone interested in doing practice-based interventions such as ELLs in their own contexts, and they are free for everyone to use and modify for their own purposes.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Being a part a community can have a positive impact on the ambition level of the intervention. For social norms and conventions around cleanliness and comfort to be questioned and challenged, interventions could focus on **communities** such as work places, day care centres and schools.
- Households interested in their energy use should have a forum for sharing their thoughts and experiences. Facilitating meetings for **deliberation and reflection** can be another fruitful point for rupture.
- Material support, such as thermometers, can already provide a **rupture in routines** as households start to reflect on their actions. Making energy use visible is important, but it should be complemented with other support so that the households learn to link their energy use to their daily practices.
- Organising final events to share findings can support **scaling up** of the outcomes.

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WHO WE ARE

The ENERGISE consortium includes ten research partners (universities, research institutes, enterprises and NGOs) from Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Slovenia, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.



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